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Lectures on the unknown

God of Herbert Spencer

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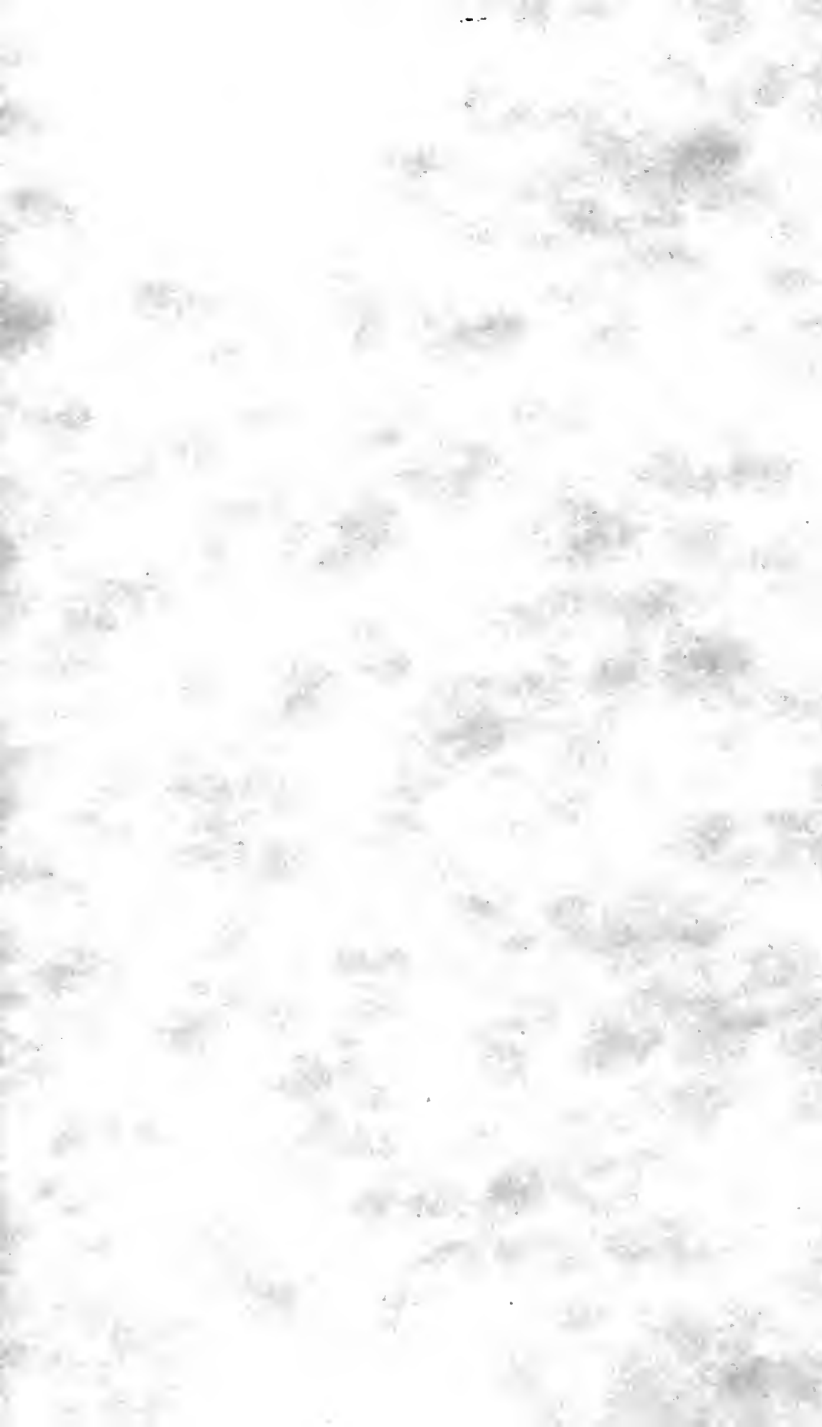
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ON THE

UNKNOWN GOD

OF

Herbert Spencer,

AND THE

PROMISE AND POTENCY

of Prof. Tyndall.

BY

REV. GEORGE T. LADD.

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I. L. HAUSER & CO., PUBLISHERS.
MILWAUKEE.

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PREFACE.

THESE two lectures were originally delivered in the city of Milwaukee, and with a view to meet the special wants of one class of hearers. Here as elsewhere, there are supposed to exist a considerable number of intelligent and candid minds which are sceptical upon fundamental points of religious belief. The being of a personal God and the immateriality of the human soul are such fundamental points. The substance and style of these lectures were wholly determined by the class to whom they were addressed. They lay no claims to being exhaustive discussions of the subjects which they treat. They are meant to be fully up to the level of thought upon which are standing those who are, by reading and hearing and thinking, considerably more cultivated than the average of even intelligent men. They are not meant to compete for a place amongst the best things said to the highest critics of what is best. Their style is in certain passages somewhat too sharp and polemical for the most satisfactory discussion;

yet this style was found best to aid in the laudable design of the speaker. It is hoped that nothing unfair or untrue has found entrance.

The first lecture seems to the author an indisputable exhibit of the weakness and confusion of thought which are found in the first chapters of the First Principles of Herbert Spencer. The validity of some arguments used in the second lecture, will be questioned by many candid thinkers still further in time to come, as it has been in the past. We have the firmest confidence, however, in the ultimate issue. Biology, as studied by the scientist, will be found to contribute toward an enlarged conception of the nature of that revelation of himself which is made in all forms of life, by the One known to Theology these ages past as the Living God.

The two lectures are published at the request of others, and in the hope that they may benefit still more of the same class for whom they were originally intended.

THE UNKNOWN GOD OF MR. SPENCER.

Among the various methods of propagating religious belief, there is a very potent and dangerous one which I will venture to call the method of "starring." This method is in force whenever an opinion upon *religious* questions is adopted solely or chiefly because that opinion has attached to itself the authority of some recognized leader of so-called "*scientific*" thought. This is, you will at once see, the old method of the *ipse-dixit* under a somewhat new and less trustworthy form. Wherein the form of the method of "starring" is in a measure new and peculiarly untrustworthy, I will now explain. The folly of a somewhat similar method is not likely to be denied in the case of those, whether professional theologians or not, who hold to so-called orthodox opinions in religion. The religiously orthodox are constantly being reproached for believing untruths simply because Augustine, or Thomas Aquinas, or Duns Scotus, or Calvin, or Wesley taught them. I do not claim that the orthodox do not deserve this reproach. It is only

to be said in mitigation of their folly, that they for the most part receive these erroneous opinions in good faith, and on the ground of the authority of men who were teaching truths within their own special sphere of research, and who proved their right to be considered authorities, so far as any men can be, by the very wide influence and respect they earned for their views. But the method of "starring" is peculiarly the method at the present time of the religiously sceptical and heterodox. It is a vastly worse form of a similar method than that of the so-called orthodox. For first of all, it begins by pretending to have unusual freedom from prejudice, and even indifference to all conclusions; it ends all the same by eagerly swallowing some one's dictum. But further, it receives without questioning the dictum of notable men, of "stars," when they are shining upon subjects upon which they have no special right to give their light. If the star turns comet and goes a-wandering among the other spheres, its light is followed all the same. But why should Tyndall or Huxley be considered especially trustworthy authorities upon theological and religious problems? Is it because they are "stars," and because the method of "starring" is good enough for propagating so-called heretical opinions? And further, it is plain that the method of "starring" involves a peculiar confidence in science and the scientists to settle all manner of problems. No man can become a "star" and propagate his views by "starring" unless he be a so-called scientist. If we should not receive the authority of Augustine or Paul against that of Mr. Huxley upon a question of fact in Anatomy; may we not trust the authority of Jesus or John against that of

any modern scientist upon a question of spiritual insight ?

Sceptical opinion upon the topic which I have in hand to-night has largely been propagated by just this same shallow method of "starring." There are many who are holding to the Atheism of Nescience simply or largely because, as they understand the matter, Herbert Spencer has taught the doctrine. Please notice that I wish to use the word Atheism with as little obloquy as the word Atheism can ever have in common speech. So long as there is a self-revealing God, the word Atheism can never be without some obloquy. By the Atheism of Nescience I mean that sort of Atheism which a man expresses when he declares : "Whether there be a God or not I do not know, and if there be a God I do not know what sort of being he is—positively, I know only that there is some sort of Power behind the phenomena; but the nature of that Power is inscrutable." The ordinary orthodox view is, that this Power which is behind the Universe *is* known to the human soul under the forms of power not only, but also of will, intelligence and love. Ask then, one who holds to the doctrine of the Unknowable, why he has drawn back into ignorance so far away from the view of pious people generally; and he will, it is likely, refer you to Herbert Spencer. He has taken his opinion in all probability by the method of "starring." Is not Mr. Spencer indeed a star of the first magnitude, and—what is just now indispensable—does he not shine with combustibles gathered from all the sciences of nature ? If it will help break up prejudice—which I doubt; if it will even stir combativeness—which I do not doubt; I desire to say that Mr. Spencer is not a

good leader upon fundamental questions of religion. For Mr. Spencer is unacquainted with true theology, is wavering, inconsistent and self-contradictory in his own views. That these objections are valid against him as a leader in religious opinion, I hope to show true so far as the first chapters of his *First Principles* are concerned.

What I have to present to you will fall under three divisions. First I shall state, as briefly but as fairly and clearly as I can, Mr. Spencer's own doctrine of the Unknowable, or—to use language which savors more of religion—of the Unknown God. Second—I shall criticise Mr. Spencer's doctrine and show it to be inconsistent and incomplete. Third—I shall try to sketch the outlines of the true doctrine of God as known by the human soul.

Let us attend, then, first of all to a statement of Mr. Spencer's doctrine of an Unknown God. Of course Mr. Spencer himself does not use the term unknown or unknowable God in setting forth his doctrine: he employs various other designations—some of which will appear in the progress of this discussion—to express that prime verity with which he deals. I use this term because it serves to connect Mr. Spencer's doctrine with my subsequent criticism of it and with my own statement of the true doctrine.

Mr. Spencer's doctrine is found in the first part of his book on *First Principles*, and especially in the first two chapters of that part. It is an attempt to reconcile the old strife between science and religion on the basis of some abstract truth which both can accept. The argument for the reconciliation is as follows. I use Mr. Spencer's own words as far as possible. Mr. Spencer begins by affirming that

there is a "soul of truth" in almost all things erroneous. "Even the absurdest report may in nearly every instance be traced to an actual occurrence." "And thus it is with human beliefs in general," especially "in the case of beliefs that have long existed and are widely diffused." An ancient and widely-spread belief cannot be propagated solely on the ground of unquestioned authority; it must contain some germ of truth, some element of verity, which gains credence for it, and also entitles it to respect. This claim that there is a "soul of truth" in all erroneous opinions, Mr. Spencer illustrates by the case of human beliefs upon the "origin, authority and functions of government." The claim is a just one, and Mr. Spencer urges it with clearness and force.

But he goes on to say, "Of all antagonisms of belief, the oldest, the widest, the most profound and the most important, is that between religion and science." Now it is probable, according to the principle of the "soul of truth" contained in things erroneous, that each party in this antagonism has "a priori probabilities" in its favor. Mr. Spencer then proposes to analyze "the diverse forms of religious belief which have existed and which still exist," compare them with the most abstract truths of science, and find their common basis in some "ultimate fact." "Religious ideas of one kind or other are almost if not quite universal," and they are endless in variety. "That these countless different, and yet allied, phenomena presented by all religions are accidental or factitious is an untenable supposition." The theory that they are due to priestcraft is untenable. These religious ideas are as vital as they are universal; they refuse to be destroyed. "Thus the universality of religious ideas, their

independent evolution among different primitive races, and their great vitality, unite in showing that their source must be deep-seated instead of superficial." If we say that the ideas are the products of the religious sentiment, "there equally arises the question—Whence comes the sentiment?" And whether we hold that this sentiment "resulted from an act of special creation," or "arose by a process of evolution," we are alike required to treat it with respect. This is a sound and creditable conclusion in Mr. Spencer, and one which I strongly commend to some of his would-be followers. "Positive knowledge," concludes Mr. Spencer, "does not and never can fill the whole region of possible thought." "At the uttermost reach of discovery there arises and must ever arise, the question—What lies beyond?" It is with this question that Religion has to do.

Mr. Spencer then turns from the defence of religion to the defence of science. Into this part of his argument we will not follow, both because we have no quarrel with science, and because his method of defending it does not concern our discussion. The conclusion arrived at is the one already alluded to—that "only in some highly abstract proposition can religion and science find a common ground."

This highly abstract proposition, upon the basis of which science and religion can be forever reconciled, Mr. Spencer then proceeds to state, as it is arrived at from the side of religion, in his chapter on "ultimate religious ideas." He begins the chapter by distinguishing between what he is pleased to call real conceptions and symbolic conceptions. The fallacy and ignorance of mental philosophy which are shown in the handling of this distinction seem to me to run

through and vitiate the entire chapter; but more concerning this further on. Mr. Spencer calls real conceptions only such as can be "mentally represented with something like completeness;" for instance a small piece of rock or an individual man. All our other conceptions, those of "great magnitudes, great durations, great numbers," "all those of much generality," are "symbolic conceptions." The thought seems to be that we can have no real conceptions of things other than those which we can represent by sensuous imagination. The question at once arises, how can we in any case be safe in the conviction that any particular one of these symbolic conceptions stands for an actual existence? Only, answers Mr. Spencer, when by "some cumulative or indirect process of thought, or by the fulfillment of predictions based on it, we are able to verify the conception." Thus our conception of the solar system is symbolic—indeed Mr. Spencer calls the solar system "an utterly inconceivable object." But there are many indirect proofs of the existence of this object though it be inconceivable; moreover we can make predictions upon the ground of our belief that it exists.

But how is it in the case of the religious ideas which men hold and suppose to correspond to certain real existences? They are all not only symbolic conceptions, but *such* symbolic conceptions as cannot be proved legitimate in either of the ways indicated above. They are "altogether vicious and illusive and in no way distinguishable from pure fictions." The atheistic theory of the universe, the theory that the universe is self-existent, is "absolutely unthinkable." The pantheistic theory of a self-created universe is equally so. The theistic theory of a universe created by some ex-

ternal agency, is equally vicious, equally unthinkable. And all the various ideas of religion as to the nature of the universe are as vicious and unthinkable as those of its origin. Mr. Spencer proves this by a process of reasoning which it is difficult to make intelligible in popular form. He quotes largely from Mr. Mansel, who, I need not say, wrote the argument which Mr. Spencer uses approvingly, with a very different end in view from that which it is here made to serve. The process consists in showing that all attempts to blend the conceptions of cause, the Absolute and the Infinite, in one idea of God, land us in hopeless self-contradiction; nay, more, that our very conceptions of First Cause, Absolute, Infinite are self-contradictory. All these so-called religious ideas, and the ideas which men derive from them, are, according to Mr. Spencer, symbolic conceptions which correspond to no reality we can arrive at, and are "altogether vicious and illusive." There is then no known God to whom we can intelligently raise an altar of devotion.

But what ultimate fact *is* all the while permanent, which explains why men so strangely persist in believing in the reality of these absurd and self-contradictory fictions? What abstract proposition can we find to take the place of the definite propositions which men continue to make concerning God—such as that he is wise and benevolent? Mr. Spencer has his ultimate basis of fact, his most abstract proposition, to propose in the room of these illusive and self-contradictory conceptions. He proposes it in the concluding words of his chapter on ultimate religious ideas; and in words which I will quote for you. "Here, then," he says—and the fervor of his language in the consciousness of his great

discovery is noteworthy—"here, then, is an ultimate religious truth of the highest possible certainty—a truth in which religions in general are at one with each other, and with a philosophy antagonistic to their special dogmas. And this truth, respecting which there is a latent agreement among all mankind, from the fetish worshipper to the most stoical critic of human creeds, must be the one we seek. If religion and science are to be reconciled, the basis of reconciliation must be this deepest, widest, most certain of all facts—that the Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."

Further alleged proof of this amazing form of reconciling science and religion by an abstract proposition, Mr. Spencer brings forward in the next three chapters. It is not necessary that we should examine them in detail. The first is upon ultimate scientific ideas; it ends with the conclusion that the 'man of science,' 'more than any other, truly *knows* that in its ultimate essence nothing can be known.' How such a declaration is likely to suit those men of science who know nearly everything and who do not believe in 'ultimate essences,' I will not stop to inquire. The second chapter discusses the relativity of all knowledge, and finds in this doctrine further proof of the proposed reconciliation of science and religion; while the last chapter is entitled "*The Reconciliation*," and is intended especially to be pacific and conciliatory towards both sides in the great controversy. Each party is dealing with the same unknown and unknowable something; therefore let us "qualify disagreement with as much as may be of sympathy."

Such is, briefly stated, and with the omission chiefly of such of his arguments as are calculated least to impress the mind not especially trained in philosophic thought—such is Mr. Spencer's doctrine of the Unknowable. It is the latest, and perhaps most popularly impressive, of the many altars which have been erected to the unknown and unknowable God. By its very nature it is adapted to exclude from the ranks both of philosophic religionists and religious scientists, all who do not bow at the altar. The deity is indeed utterly inscrutable, is not called divine, is only called "Power," and a few other awe-inspiring terms. But all men are all the same invited to fraternize over and upon the altar, are forbidden forever to strive further to look for any God enshrined in forest or mountain, in earth or star, in the soul, or in Jesus called Christ.

As the second main division of our discussion, I ask your attention to a criticism of this doctrine of an unknown God as it is held by Mr. Spencer. To save the necessity of retracing our steps exactly over the ground just trodden, I will place the criticism I have to make in a series of brief remarks. Detailed and exhaustive criticism of such a subject is not possible in a popular lecture. And

First. The attempted reconciliation of Mr. Spencer is neither in theory nor in fact a reconciliation. Remember that the main intent of the author seems to be, not to introduce among the already conflicting forms of religion, a new form, but to find the "ultimate basis" in fact, the "abstract proposition," upon which all can philosophically unite. Now nothing is more certain than that during the last eighteen years there has been no reconciliation accomplished on the

basis proposed by Mr. Spencer. Some of the scientists are more or less avowedly standing upon this basis of Mr. Spencer; but, whether stupidly or not, the religious party quite refuse to recognize them as standing upon a common basis with themselves. They persist, whether stupidly or not, in asserting that men have much more knowledge of God than Mr. Spencer admits. They count amongst their party many men familiar with science, who for their familiarity all the more see God revealed in the facts and laws of the sciences. There has been a growing disposition amongst the party of believers in God to hail all genuine science and to consider it as God's truth, as one form of the self-revelation of God. But there is no reconciliation, so far as can be seen, upon the basis of an unknowable God. Now this failure of the scheme to reconcile must be disappointing to its author; for he plainly believed that to reach his point of view "must cause a revolution of thought fruitful in beneficial consequences." The failure creates a presumption against the truth of the doctrine of reconciliation. For it shows that men in general do not recognize in the doctrine the gist of their abiding belief.

And indeed examination shows us that Mr. Spencer's basis not only has not been, but also can never become, one of reconciliation between those who believe in a personal God and those who do not. Mr. Tyndall has said that "to find a legitimate satisfaction for the religious emotions is the problem of problems of our day." Men cannot find in the Unknowable, even when you spell it with a Capital and underscore it, that which satisfies their religious emotions. They want to revere God, and who shall tell

them whether the Unknowable is venerable or not? They wish to know that God loves them and that they may love God; but an absolutely inscrutable power is not an object for human affection, nor a subject—so far as we know—of affection toward man. Men, so long as they have religious *feeling*, cannot be reconciled upon Mr. Spencer's platform. I do not now bring forward this fact as an argument against Mr. Spencer's doctrine, but only against the hope that it will ever reconcile contending parties. If it be true, it will prove futile as a basis of reconciliation, until the religious nature of man is changed. This consideration might well teach us how much weight lies in the popinjay remarks of the strutting camp-followers of this great general. They speak as school-girls and sophomores, nay, as infants in arms, when they talk about five or ten years as the extreme limit within which all men will come together and be reconciled, on the basis of Mr. Spencer.

Upon the doctrine of Mr. Spencer I remark,

Second. That it entirely fails to furnish legitimate satisfaction for the religious emotions. I have already said that this failure prevents his theory from serving as a basis of reconciliation. I now bring forward the failure as a direct and strong proof that the doctrine is untrue. Mr. Spencer and a very few others may claim that their religious emotions are satisfied with this abstract proposition; to these the reply is valid; you either give to this abstract proposition certain emotions which do not befit it, or else you are yourself a stunted and imperfect man in respect to your religious emotions. For the truth is that men have hearts as well as heads, and that, in religious as in most other beliefs,

their hearts are as potent as their heads to determine their beliefs. Man is a very complex being; and when you try to cramp his beliefs by leaving any large part of his complex being out of the account, you are doomed, in the general and in the long run, to failure. There is no more certain fact than that there are in man religious instincts, cravings, outgoings of soul toward the divine in adoration, trust, obedience and love. With all men, except at most a very few, an Unknowable—the abstract proposition that the Power behind the phenomena is inscrutable—does not satisfy this religious nature. The pantheism of Strauss in his “Old Faith and the New,” is, in this regard, vastly preferable to Mr. Spencer’s barren doctrine. For Strauss at least claims that humility, awe, reverence and trust are becoming emotions before that universal order which he calls to the seat of divinity; and claims also that he personally is in the exercise of such religious emotions. But before the absolutely Unknowable, who can have any emotion whatever? That, however, Mr. Spencer himself knows much of his own Unknowable, we shall see by and by. But it is only through this clandestine way of fetching in religious feeling at the back door, as though an open and front entrance were too good for it, that the doctrine of the Unknowable acknowledges it at all. If, then, that doctrine could be proved by a concentration of the strongest arguments, its proof would only throw the whole nature and life of man into hopeless contradiction. The larger half of human nature would still cry out against it. And if there were no logic of the feeling, no translation into the forms of thought of the arguments which lie in feeling itself, feeling would

still play its mighty part. Convince men that God is Unknowable, and they will still recognize him as a person, by the instinctive longing to come into personal relations with Him of trust and love.

In calling your attention to another kindred thought which makes against Mr. Spencer's statement—I remark,

Third. That Mr. Spencer's own doctrine of a "soul of truth" in things erroneous proves too much for his doctrine of an Unknown God. His whole argument rests back upon this assumption of a "soul of truth" in things erroneous. But what is involved in this true assumption? Just this: that we may criticize man's history and man's nature, and that we may expect to find that his permanent and universal beliefs are trustworthy and correspond to the reality of things. We too set out with Mr. Spencer to criticize man's religious nature and history. We do this with confidence that they will reveal truth to us. Mr. Spencer concludes that there is at least a Power manifested by the phenomena; we, and almost all other students of history, conclude that there is more than mere power. Even Mr. Arnold finds plain traces of a "power which makes for righteousness." We know, then, so far, according to Mr. Arnold, the nature of this power—viz: that it "makes for righteousness." But we find far back in all history that men have called this power their *Heavenly Father*. Max Mueller finds it in the hymns of the Vedas, every classical scholar finds it in the ancient classics, Wilkinson finds it upon the hieroglyphics of Egypt, the pious of to-day find it in Job and the other oldest books of the Old Testament. Is there no soul of truth in this abiding wide-spread belief in a

Heavenly Father ? Men believe likewise in a moral order, in a controller of destiny, in a divine voice speaking through the conscience. Will Mr. Spencer account for these beliefs by pointing out "the soul of truth" which is in them ? Will he not add something to his abstract proposition ? Plainly, if he refuse, his so-called "soul of truth" in things erroneous is scarcely worthy, in this case, of being called a *soul*: for the life-blood has been all sucked out of the idea and the carcass tossed over into the "death-kingdom of abstract thought."

To illustrate by Mr. Spencer's own example. I am dealing with the phenomena of government in the effort to determine what is the soul of truth that breathes itself out in them all. I call attention to how permanent and wide-spread is the belief of men that they must be governed somehow in order to social existence; and with the belief a corresponding practice of instituting and submitting to some form of government. No tribe, I say, of South Sea island savages, that has not a chief and tribal customs. There must be something in all this, I infer with truth; must be some ultimate fact or abstract proposition upon which can be reconciled those whose theory is, that government is a blessing, and those who hold it to be a fiction or a curse. But the proposition must be sufficiently abstract; for there is endless quarrel amongst the advocates of different forms of government, and hopeless difficulty in discussing the origin and nature of just government. Gathering my wits together for a profound statement, I announce the discovery of the ultimate fact. I find this highest political truth, this deepest, widest and most certain of political facts, in the statement that the

impulse which the phenomena of politics manifest to us is utterly inscrutable. Oh but, you would say, can you not tell us more than that? Can you not at least, as a philosopher, venture to explain what the inspired poet Schiller means when he sings of "holy order, the daughter of heaven, who wove the dearest of all bonds, the impulse to the Father-land"?

I do not see how a student of history who has bent his ear to catch the cries of longing, the hymns of praise, the prayers for blessing, the accents of devotion and self-surrender, which have been arising from the millions of all nations these thousands of years toward the Heavenly Father, can see the soul of truth in the barren proposition that the Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable. And history is a mighty teacher; every whit as mighty and as much a revealer of the power behind the Universe, as is so-called science.

But of Mr. Spencer's doctrine of the Unknowable, I remark,—

Fourth. That it is largely founded upon a narrow and unsound mental philosophy. Mr. Spencer shows, it seems to me, considerable ignorance and misconception regarding the nature, the process and the grounds of human thought. This charge can only be substantiated at present, by indicating one or two directions in which every reader should beware of being misled.

Mr. Spencer's use * of the words "conceive" and "conception," and especially the argument he founds upon his use of

*The misuse and misunderstanding of the words "conceive" and "conception" constitute one of the distinguishing scandals of English and American philosophical writing. Scarcely anything in our philosophical language needs more attention than the constant and intelligent discrimination between thought proper and the picture-making power of the sensuous imagination.

those words, indicate a narrow and unsound mental philosophy. "Conceive" and "conception" in psychological language refer most properly to the work of the understanding in abstracting and putting together again the marks of the objects with which it deals. For instance, when, from experience with many individual men, I draw off those qualities in which the individuals agree, and then unite them in thought to form a notion of man in general, I conceive man; and what I conceive in thought is called my conception of man. Mr. Spencer seems to think that there is some special lack of correspondence to reality in every act of conception, where you cannot represent the object in the sensuous imagination. I can form a picture of Beatrice Cenci, which corresponds to the reality so far as do the pictures of her which I have seen; I cannot form such a picture of woman in general. But the amount of clear knowledge in my mind corresponding to the word "woman" is much larger than that corresponding to the particular name Beatrice Cenci. But, according to Mr. Spencer, all conceptions of "much generality" are "symbolic conceptions." The truth is, however, that all conceptions whatever are often incomplete, shifting in the individual mind, different in different minds; but they are all real whenever they correspond to real individuals or classes. The act of imagination and the act of conception are different things. An act of sensuous imagination is sometimes possible as an accompaniment of a conception, sometimes not; sometimes helpful, sometimes not. It helps my conception of Beatrice Cenci to hold her picture before the mind's eye; but it would debase and hinder my conception of God to try to frame any picture of Him. But my

conception, as that highest form of conception which we call an idea, is, in the latter case, much clearer than in the former. To speak as though this form of clearness upon which Mr. Spencer insists, were necessary to a real as distinguished from a symbolic conception, is to confuse thought with sensuous imagination.

But further, there is a vast amount of knowledge which does not come to us by the act of "conceiving" at all. All our knowledge is girded round with faith. We begin with unconscious use of incomprehensible postulates, with instinctive acts of trust, with believing many things we cannot prove, many things which, when we try to prove them, seem to lead us into hopeless self-contradictions. We come into the world with what Mr. C. C. Everett has called "good faith." The ancient oracle bade every man "know thyself," and, to the novice, what seems easier than to know himself? But to the thinker there is much mystery and chance for self-contradiction in self-knowledge. Sense, perception, thought, freedom, the relation of soul and body, the nature of both, are not easy to be explained, have never yet been made fully intelligible. No one knows all this any better than Mr. Spencer. Why then not admit the chance of an imperfect knowledge of God by that indirect proof which enables us to attain the full consciousness of all our choicest knowledge? Surely there is more in human knowledge than can be "*conceived*" in Mr. Spencer's use of the word. Surely there is still a chance at least to verify by indirect proof, what he would call our symbolic conception of God.

But, Mr. Spencer argues, this conception of God, so-

called, is shown to be, when you pick it in pieces, wholly constructed of self-contradictory elements. Its definite elements are utterly unthinkable in themselves and in their union. The only real thing in the conception is the declaration that the real thing is utterly unknowable. Now, were this the place and time, I might follow in detail Mr. Spencer's use of the words First Cause, Infinite and Absolute, and criticise his argument based upon this use. It would be found to be a species of that jugglery with words in which Mr. Mansel and some of the theologians have been so forward and successful. It may be said of the big thing Infinite and Absolute, very much what Mr. Martineau said of the little thing atom, with which some scientists are so fond of dealing. You get out of it by argument just what you put into it by assumption. This jugglery is like that of the old-time philosophers, who proved that there could be no such thing as motion. It represents a real difficulty of thought, but it is jugglery with words all the same.

The last criticism I will now make against the view of Mr. Spencer is in the form of what the logicians call an *argumentum ad hominem*. I remark—

Fifth, That Mr. Spencer's own admissions overthrow his own statement. Indeed, when picked out from scattered places and put together into a whole, they almost constitute anew the old fullness of knowledge which men have always supposed themselves to have concerning God. Let us examine the matter. Mr. Spencer declares that the Power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable. And yet, it appears, as Father Dalgairns sarcastically

remarks, that a great deal is known about the Unknowable; and by Mr. Spencer too.

For, first of all, the Unknowable is known to be a Power; and it must be a great power, for the *Universe*—that is, all manifestations of power—manifests it to us. But power, inconceivably great—enough to accomplish all things done and even more—has been by Theists from time immemorial held to be an attribute of God. But Mr. Spencer speaks of *the* Power; and as he nowhere uses the plural and doubtless holds to the unity of the Universe, having himself made an attempt to represent in philosophy this unity of the universe, he must believe in the unity also of the Power which the one universe manifests. This is promising; for we all incline to have not more than one God, if we are indeed to have any at all. Whether it be better to have one God than none, or not; it is certainly better to have one than many. Well, we have one Power, then; we know thus much, on Mr. Spencer's authority, about the unknowable.

But further, Mr. Spencer clearly reasons as though this one Power were the abiding thing amidst all the shifting phenomena. And this one Power is not the phenomenal universe itself, but that which this universe manifests to us. What is the meaning of all this, if the Unknowable be not somehow the abiding ground of the phenomena of the universe? But this is almost exactly what Theists mean when they intelligently speak of God as the Absolute. Mr. Spencer also believes in the *permanency* of the one Power, through a time we might almost say practically eternal—if his own doctrine of evolution is true.

And besides all this, the universe manifests to us this one abiding power. Indeed; may we not then inquire under what forms the universe manifests the Power to us? To do this is to search into the proofs and qualities of the divine existence. *How does* the universe manifest this Power? as benevolent or malevolent, as wise or otherwise? may we not inquire? No: for it is utterly inscrutable. But it is Power—One Power—abiding Power—manifest Power. Force—Unity—Eternity—Revelation—what else have we than all this, known by Mr. Spencer, when pleading ignorance, and about the Unknowable?

But Mr. Spencer knows more than this about the Unknowable. He thinks “very likely there will ever remain a need to give shape to that indefinite sense of an Ultimate existence which forms the basis of intelligence;” and on the same page he speaks of an “Ultimate Cause” which is one with the Unknowable because it cannot be mentally realized at all. This almost takes our breath away. For when the heavens were swept clear of all recognizable shapes of divinity, here comes rushing in again, borne upon the mighty wings of philosophy—an ultimate existence and an ultimate cause. A *cause* indeed! an *existence* indeed! an ultimate cause and existence! Why, this is the very conception we forever banished as a fiction, utterly inconceivable. It must be that it returns upon the Pegasus of Matthew Arnold. Some poor old dead horse of natural theology has taken wings and rushed into the vacuum of the Unknowable, bearing upon his back an ultimate existence, an ultimate cause. We must summon Mr. Mansel to teach Mr. Spencer not to use words so self-contradictory as are found in these

phrases, an "ultimate existence" and an "Ultimate cause."

But the sphere of Mr. Spencer's knowledge continues widening. For he comes to speak of the "established order of the Unknowable," of the "actions of the Unseen Reality" as well as the resulting rewards and punishments. It seems, then, that the Unknowable has an established order of actions; and that this system of rewards and punishments under which we all exist, results in some way or other from the actions of the Unknowable, is indeed a part of its established order. And now we begin to know a vast deal about the Unknowable and of a sort to come very near to any man. The moral law is *his* established order, rewards and punishments are results of *his* actions. Bow your heads, then, ye sinners for he will give you stripes: the moral order, established and manifested in the Universe, will grind you into dust. But oh, will it not also *save*? Is there no inspiration, guidance, help, salvation, from the Unseen Reality, the one Power, the Ultimate Cause, the established order?

Mr. Spencer knows something even about this—a little—but only a little. In the closing words of his argument he reflects somewhat sadly upon the duty given him to proclaim the doctrine of an Unknown God, and upon the probability that his proclamation will not be accepted. But "like every other man, he may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through whom works the Unknown Cause, and when the Unknown Cause produces in him a certain belief, he is thereby authorized to profess and act out that belief." How glad we are to know all this about the Unknowable! He moves every man, produces belief in man, and the belief which he produces has author-

ity. But after all, is not this perhaps the nose of one of those poor old dead horses of natural theology, thrust uninvited into the vacuum of the Unknowable ?

To sum up, however, this last argument, we find that there is one comprehensive and abiding Power revealed in the universe, that this power is the Ultimate Existence and the Ultimate Cause, that it has an established order of actions from which result the phenomena of the moral law, that a man may trust the belief which the Power produces and act safely upon its authority. And now, what more do we need to know about the Unknowable than that which Mr. Spencer has told us ? Thought and Love remain to be ascribed to this Unknowable in order that the soul of man may bow down to the Heavenly Father. Of these qualities there are only slightest hints in Mr. Spencer's doctrine; still there are hints. What, we ask, is more clearly manifested than *thought* in this universe which manifests the one Power ? How can there be a universe, a unity of force and action, an established order, a course in history, an evolution or development, without the marks of thought ? May we not reason from the universal manifestation of thought to the One thinking being as confidently as from the manifestation of forces to the one Power ? And then, how our souls cry out for Love: yes, even the soul of Mr. Spencer. He wants to be considered an agency through whom works the trustworthy Unknown cause. He quotes poetry in a sort of praise of the Unknowable. Is this weakness in Mr. Spencer ? Is it not rather that strength of manhood which is more clearly shown, the more the man cries out after God ?

In fine, our emotions and thoughts are very conflicting in view of Mr. Spencer's doctrine. We are disturbed when we learn that the time-honored notions of God are utterly inconceivable; but we are comforted somewhat on being told that the solar system is an "utterly inconceivable object." The doctrine of the Unknowable makes us feel as though bereft of something all-important, until we discover how much he who promulgates the doctrine knows about his own Unknowable. And if Mr. Spencer will let us search the universe to see whether there are not Thought and Love as well as Power manifested therein, and if he considers, as he doubtless does, the entire human soul with its beliefs and cravings as a part of the universe, and so especially to be searched; we will no further concern ourselves with his doctrine. And if you please, what we find, provided we find Thought and Love—we will call God. This is a good word, spelled with only three letters, and dear to millions of souls. It gathers and wraps up for contemplation all that is dignified in the world without and the soul within; it alone makes life worth living and death not overmuch to be feared. Why should any man find his religion or philosophy in declarations as unsubstantial—to borrow an illustration—as the enunciation of Mr. Dombey's mother-in-law, who never could remember names: "There is no what's-his-name but Thingummy; and what-you-may-call-it is his prophet." It is thin, cheap philosophy, and poor watery religion which, either through excess of piety or impiety, *knows* nothing of God.

And now in conclusion I will state briefly the doctrine of God as known by the human soul. You will listen sympa-

thetically to one who is forced, in ten minutes time, to trace the outline of so vast a proof. But if you will listen patiently, I hope to indicate a very valuable and helpful line of thought.*

Consider—First—God is known only so far as he is self-revealed to us. There is and ever will remain an incalculably vast unrevealed depth of divine being and action. No wise theology has ever claimed, no thoughtful Theist ever supposed, that more than the very little which is revealed, can be known of God. But thus the case stands with all our knowledge; thus in our daily experience with that most intimate form of knowing, a man's knowledge of his own soul. There are, as you must guess, thoughtful hearer—unknown actualities, inconceivable possibilities of being, in your own soul. There is a background of your personal being which you have never pierced; nay, a fathomless depth of personal powers beneath every conscious act. You cannot fully comprehend your own vision, or thought, or beliefs, or freedom in action. But are you therefore to refuse to say, I know I am, I know I see, I know I think, I know that I am free? What is given you in these primary beliefs and intuitions is not vitiated because you cannot fully comprehend their origin or nature. What you *do* know is also not vitiated because there is a vast more beyond. So in the case of our knowledge of God; we know in part, we know fragmentarily, we know with many difficulties arising at once in the effort to tell *how* we know. We know what God has revealed to us.

*The thoughts so meagrely and unsatisfactorily traced in the following pages have been given a somewhat full expression in the two numbers of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January and October, 1877.

Consider—Second—That the self-revelation of God is made in the entire universe. Power and Thought—and we hope you are confident though against many appearances—also Love, are to be found everywhere. God reveals himself in so-called nature. He has stamped his thought upon every object and he expresses his order and reason in every law. God reveals himself in history. The Power which lies behind the struggles of the race upward, which coordinates all the otherwise diverse phenomena, which says to nations “come,” and “go,” and weaves the wondrous web of universal progress, is none other than the power of God. History could not be; the idea of it is unintelligible, without God. All art, with its growing aspiration and achievement, tells the praises of that absolute beauty which God loves and expresses for us, which in the last analysis he himself is. The scientist has good reason to cry out with more perfect sincerity, and yet in the words of Kepler: “I read thy thoughts, oh God.”

The very first and fundamental postulates of our own being are these; the universe is thinkable, and my thought is trustworthy and true. So does the universe necessarily manifest a thinking One behind and in it; so also does the very process of human thought both indicate and guarantee a self-revealing God. No doctrine of evolution or second causes does away with this necessity of thinking Thought itself as behind and in the universe of thinkable persons and things. Otherwise all is but a “moving row of shadow-shapes that come and go round with this sun-illuminated lantern.” To say that the bee makes the cell without thought, is only to make the question more pressing: who made both bee

and cell, so that bee can make cell, and cell is for the bee, and both cell and bee are for me a thinker, in themselves and in their relations, thinkable things?

But, consider—Third—that God's self-revelation is an enlarging and progressive one. It is of its very nature historic and going forward toward a goal. We think we discover progress in history; we are confident that progress will continue to be made. What is the inference from the discovery? what is the meaning of the conviction? What power except one of exceeding thought and broad benevolence could so weave the phenomena of progress? This is the work of God. His self-revelation is never, then, a completed one. There is ever more and more to follow. There are a few, a very few things, which we must know about God, if we are to live aright. We must know enough to call him Heavenly Father. We must be wise enough to receive in docility his wisdom, in gladness to receive his love and answer it with returning love. This done, we may go on and on in learning more of God. And should we be borne as on the wings of archangels throughout countless ages, there would be still more, and more and yet more beyond to be revealed of Him.

But, consider—Fourth—For each man the organ through and within which God's self-revelation comes, is his entire soul. All the powers of complex man are concerned in this knowledge of God. This is true of even those faculties and activities which are generally considered to have little to do with a man's knowledge of God. Strength and weakness of body ought alike to reveal to us our Father in Heaven. For when we think of it, the strength we call our own

is only the inflow into us of the divine forces from without; and our weakness brings more clearly to us the sense of dependence upon some one not ourselves. The growth of trust and love and self-surrender in the family, fit us to receive enlarged knowledge of God. The first cry of the first child ought to make the parent's own heart cry out like a hungry child to the all-Father in Heaven.

Our deep seated cravings, our constant dissatisfaction, teach us of a God and lead us toward Him. The soul is normally and necessarily hungry for things which cannot come from the orchards and gardens of this world. Man is made to desire fruits of Paradise. The sense of dependence leads in the same direction, viz., toward the Absolute—toward God. The voice of conscience whispers or thunders within the soul the message of a spiritual law with unlimited sanctions, and showing by its very nature that it is a law given by a Holy One, even by God. Man is made for the self-revelation of God: and every man's completeness of manhood may be tested by the amount of truth he has learned concerning God. But if a man distort his soul, he cannot have the clear vision of God. No amount of subtle ratiocination will bring it to a man who has shut his inner eye to the art-work of his spiritual nature. The failure of such a man by arguments to reach the Eternal does not prove the arguments for God's existence unsound; it does not prove there is no God, does not prove there is only an unknowable God. The failure proves that the man's soul is awry and unsymmetrical. He may reason well, but he has not heard the evidence. He cannot hear it, for he has quenched the witness within.

The whole truth was long since stated clearly enough in a book with which you are all doubtless familiar. I quote, in these last sentences, a philosophy more comprehensive and sound, a religion more cheering and nourishing, than are to be found in the barren abstraction of Herbert Spencer. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." "Who is this, that darkeneth counsel by words-without knowledge?" "Gird up now thy loins like a man and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment?" "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? If iniquity be in thy hand, put it away—then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot." "Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." "God is love—he that loveth not knoweth not God." "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another." "No man hath seen God at any time." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."



THE "PROMISE AND POTENCY" OF MR. TYNDALL.

In the chart of those persons who are looking to the heavens of science for guidance out of the slavery of superstition, Mr. Tyndall is set down as a "star" of the first magnitude. And indeed, as a brilliant experimenter and lecturer within a certain limited sphere of the physical sciences, he has high claims to this position. It is not strange then, that the celebrated proposal for a prayer guage, absurd as it was, derived much extra consideration from the understanding that so bright a star as Mr. Tyndall was shining through the proposal. Nor is it any stranger that the declaration of this scientist concerning "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life," in his celebrated Belfast address in 1874, was greeted when first made, as we are told it was, with "whirlwinds of applause." Nor, further, can we wonder, when we consider how much weight is given by many minds to the most trivial declarations of so-called great scientists and leading thinkers, that the declaration of this Belfast address has since been welcomed in

so many quarters. It seems that multitudes regard it as the "death-knell of superstition."

But as for me, I suspect that we have here again an example of starring. Starring, as some of you will remember, I defined to be the method of propagating opinions in philosophy and religion upon the mere authority of some recognized teacher in the natural sciences. For the method, then, in which this declared opinion of Mr. Tyndall has been propagated, we make no effort to conceal our contempt. Starring is contemptible; and he who gets his opinions largely in this way is likely to have only contemptible opinions.

But the opinion thus propagated, both from its nature and its source, is entitled to something quite different from either unquestioning acceptance or contemptuous rejection. It is entitled to thoughtful examination. And not to the connection of any particular advocate with the opinion, so much as to the opinion itself, would we direct such examination. Because, however, the opinion is at present so closely connected with the name of this scientist, I will make three preliminary remarks upon Mr. Tyndall, as the advocate of this opinion.

And, First—I think we may say that this opinion is one which Mr. Tyndall is not especially competent to give. For the question involved in the opinion is not one of science in Mr. Tyndall's sphere of researches, but rather one of philosophy or theology. Not that any man has not a right to form an opinion upon the problem of matter and mind; but that the problem is one which calls as much for thorough training in the knowledge of mind, both finite and ab-

solute, as in the knowledge of so-called material things. And Mr. Tyndall is far from being an acute philosopher or theologian. He declares that he discerns in matter "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life." But suppose we ask of him, on what grounds do you base your declaration? From his own words we find that in making the declaration he relies upon the "continuity of nature," that he "by an intellectual necessity crosses the boundary," and *so* discerns in matter this large "promise and potency." But in order to do this Mr. Tyndall must step out of his own domain of research. For, the "continuity of nature," and our right to make inferences upon it, as well as every form of "intellectual necessity," whether real or only alleged, involve questions of metaphysics rather than physics.

Besides, when a student of material forces and laws declares that the promise and potency of everything terrestrial is with him, he virtually tells the student of mind—I am your superior in your own sphere of research, and I explain everything, so far as explanation is possible. There is no mind which is not matter, and there are no forces of mind which are not resolvable into physical forces. Now, this is shallow arrogance in the case of any man who has not made of mind a special and thorough study. When, then, Mr. Tyndall tells us of phenomena and laws of matter which he has observed, we all accept with gratitude his contributions to our stock of knowledge. But when he comes with the proposal to explain, by swallowing, up all the phenomena and laws of mind which the student of mind has observed, the latter may say to him: not quite so fast—please step back on your own ground, my dear sir—for I

am your peer, and perhaps superior here. Is it incredible that philosophers and theologians should object when antagonistic opinions upon their own special topics of research are likely to be widely propagated by the shallow method of starrng ?

On the connection of Mr. Tyndall with the opinion of his Belfast address, I remark—

Second—That this expression of opinion is in quite obvious contradiction with other expressions of opinion from Mr. Tyndall upon the same general topic. It is indeed a small thing for a modern scientist to contradict himself constantly when handling truths of philosophy and religion. Are we to attribute this habit of self-contradiction to candor ? Are we not rather to attribute it to lack of training in thought upon these truths, together with the pressure of natural instincts, beliefs and emotions, upon the narrow, hard conclusions of the scientific intellect ?

The statement that in matter is to be discerned “the promise and potency of every form and quality of life” is as bald and clearly defined Materialism as one can readily find. Men in general suppose that there are two classes of phenomena; so diverse that they prove the existence of two different substances, one called matter, the other, mind. That the two are connected in the world of experience, no one can doubt. But Prof. Tyndall alleges them to be so connected that the phenomena of mind are to be wholly explained by those of matter; that matter is the sole cause of what we are pleased to call mind. And yet in his own essay on Scientific Materialism he recognizes in the facts of consciousness another class of phenomena, the connection

of which with Physics is unthinkable; and declares that the "chasm between" the two classes of phenomena must ever remain "intellectually impassable." Has Mr. Tyndall, then, passed in thought his own "intellectually impassable" chasm? Has he qualified himself to announce as the connection of cause and effect his own "unthinkable" connection? Or has he perhaps changed his opinion, as he has a perfect right to do, in the time between these two declarations of it?

But in November, 1875, in the Fortnightly Review, we find him adopting the words of Du Bois Raymond: "it is absolutely and forever inconceivable that a number of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen atoms should be otherwise than indifferent as to their own position and motion." To these words of Du Bois Raymond, he adds in his own words: "The continuity between molecular processes and the phenomena of consciousness is a rock on which materialism must inevitably split whenever it pretends to be a complete philosophy of the human mind." Has Mr. Tyndall conceived his own absolutely inconceivable? Has he split upon the rock since he sailed upon it, or did he sail upon it in full consciousness that *his* materialism, like that of all others, would thereon be split?

But recall again the declaration of the Belfast address. In matter is "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life." The link then, between the phenomena of matter and those of mind is that of cause and effect; matter is the cause, mind is only one division of the phenomena of matter. For, the *potency* is in matter and we can discern it; this potency includes, we are also told, "every form of

terrestrial life;" the life which we call consciousness and free will, as well as that arrangement of the molecules of the crystal which we do not call life. And yet Mr. Tyndall elsewhere declares, "we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning from the one to the other." Has there been a recent unexpected development of an undiscovered rudimentary organ? This would be a remarkable instance of evolution. But however candid this great scientist may be in contradicting himself, we should scarcely expect him to indulge this sort of candor within the limits of one address. The more, however, we study the path of these stars when shining upon great depths of metaphysics and religion, the more do we discover of their aberrations. And Mr. Tyndall contradicts himself, flatly but unconsciously, in this Belfast address. For just after his dictum about "promise and potency," he says the following: "We can trace the development of a nervous system and correlate with it the parallel phenomena of sensation and thought. But we try to soar in a vacuum the moment we seek to comprehend the connection between them." "There is no fusion possible between the two classes of facts—no motor energy in the intellect of man to carry it without logical rupture from one to the other." Mr. Tyndall adds these words to what he has just said of the promise and potency of matter, apparently through fear of the title materialist: "There is, you will observe," he has just said, "no very rank materialism here." What we do observe is, first—the declaration of rank materialism,

and then another declaration which is not materialism at all, but a rank contradiction of the first declaration.

Taking all that this writer has said upon this topic and trying to put it together, we are in great straits. We find that Mr. Tyndall feels the "intellectual necessity of crossing the boundary," and overleaping a chasm which remains "intellectually impassable." That he feels himself called to discern an "unthinkable connection." That he soars upon the "promise and potency" of matter into a "vacuum." That he, to use his own borrowed illustration—makes the effort of the man who tries to lift himself by his own waistband. One would think these logical somersaults impossible for a man thoroughly trained in the strictly inductive methods of modern science. But alas, this is the use which some of our scientists make of the Baconian induction. And we shall see that other great star, Mr. Huxley, wandering, comet-like, amongst the spheres, while trying to give his light upon the nature and origin of that protoplasm, which he supposes to be explained by calling it carbonic acid, water and ammonia.

Upon the connection between Mr. Tyndall and his opinion I make this third remark—that this particular opinion of Mr. Tyndall is pure and simple Materialism. I use the word Materialism with as little opprobrium as possible. Just so long as man has a self-asserting soul and is conscious of his own likeness and relations to God, materialism will have to bear some opprobrium. Nor do I call Mr. Tyndall a materialist. For in the presence of so many explanations of his own position I should rather he would himself choose the one by which to abide. He evidently dislikes the term.

He is not, as I have shown, a consistent and thorough materialist. Indeed, he has made more declarations of opinion con than pro materialism. I only say, then, that when he declares that in matter is to be discerned "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life," this particular declaration is materialism. It is—to use his own term—"very rank materialism." Mr. Tyndall makes this declaration, approving to some extent what Bruno declared—that matter is "the universal mother who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb." He also says, stating Mr. Spencer's opinion with approbation, "Our states of consciousness are mere *symbols* of an outside entity which produces them and determines the order of their succession." This outside entity is one with what Mr. Tyndall calls matter. Thought, that is, and feeling and choice of man are all only "symbols" of the same outside entity of which the movements in the protoplasm of brain are also symbols. The movements of protoplasm are the causes of what we call states of consciousness. And this protoplasm, according to Mr. Huxley, is only carbonic acid, water and ammonia. If any form of expressing Materialism smells rank to heaven, surely it is this. The materialistic view of the problem of matter and mind is that which explains the latter entirely by the former. Atoms, and movements of atoms, give me these, and I will explain the universe, so far as explanation is now possible—this is the promise of materialism's hypothesis—this is the promise discerned in Mr. Tyndall's outlook beyond the boundary.

Now, when Mr. Tyndall tries to show, as he did in his controversy with Mr. Martineau—that the declaration of

his Belfast address is *not* materialism, because he has himself elsewhere declared that materialism is unsatisfactory—the reply is pertinent; so much the worse for your case, for you prove that you have often contradicted yourself; not that others are mistaken when they allege this particular declaration to be pure and simple—even “rank” materialism. But leaving the great scientist to adjust his own various declarations as best he may, we give our attention to that particular one made in the Belfast address. In matter is “the promise and potency of every form and quality of life.” Forgetting henceforth who made the declaration, we inquire simply—is it true?

It is so far from true that it merits contradiction in every part. So far is it from true, that it is scarcely possible to contradict it at once flatly and comprehensively enough. Matter, it is said, gives us “the promise and potency of every form and quality of life.” On the contrary, I aver that matter cannot of itself give us anything. Matter cannot give us even the so-called material universe. Matter cannot give us life. Matter cannot give us mind. In antithesis to the sweeping declaration which makes the promise and potency of everything to be in matter, let us examine in order these three contradictory declarations. Matter cannot give us the so-called material universe. This statement that there is no potency in matter alone to build up even so-called material things, may appear startling to some. But let us examine it.

It is time, then, that we should inquire, what do we mean by matter? It might seem at first sight as though any man could give an answer to so simple a question. But a

little reflection brings us upon unexpected difficulties. We find on first examination that we have in experience only certain sensations, together with a certain belief that our sensations correspond to, and are caused by, the qualities of something outside of ourselves. We find on further examination that certain ones of our sensations, as for instance notably those of color, sound, smell and taste, cannot possibly correspond to any qualities in this something outside of us. We still, however, believe these sensations to be caused by this something not ourselves. Finally, we begin to doubt whether we have in our sensations anything which corresponds to the outlying reality. At this point Metaphysics steps in and tries to show that there are with all these sensations, and as a sort of indestructible frame-work in which they are set, certain intellectual forms of knowing this outside something, and that these forms of knowing are proved by their own intrinsic nature to have some correspondence to the reality of things. But we turn away from Metaphysics, as dealing with abstractions and unproved quidities and entities, and go for real knowledge to Physics instead.

We ask of Physics and other kindred sciences, What is this unknown something? What is matter? In reply we hear much talk about two words which many suppose to be great solvents of the mystery of the material universe. We hear of atoms and force. What is an atom? we further ask. And what is force? And hereupon the scientists are thrown into quite as much divergence and confusion as the theologians when asked to define the Trinity. Putting together the different assertions and views you can get a

complete circle, in the following fashion: An atom, say many high authorities, as Boscovich, Ampere, and others, is only a centre of forces of attraction and repulsion. It is, that is to say, the metaphysical point in space around which goes on the endless witch-dance of atomic energy. In this case everything material is resolved into force; for the omnipotent atom is become only a centre of force.

What, then, is *force*? we ask—very eagerly, for we have reduced the total entity of the universe—provided only that our answer to the former question is true—to this one word, force. And now we are told on high scientific authority, like that of Prof. Clerk Maxwell, that “force is whatever changes or tends to change the motion of a body.” What, however, is motion if there is nothing to be moved? And, what is the motion of a body, if body is already resolved into nothing but motion around centres of motion with nothing to be moved? Surely they are not without reason who claim the light of science has led us into the Cimmerian darkness where “naught is everything and everything is naught.” Let us return again to our inquiry, what is an atom? We get most relief from what the science of chemistry has to disclose. With chemistry an atom is simply that smallest particle of any simple substance into which the substance can be made by chemical processes to divide itself. Simple substances are often made to divide themselves into atoms by rendering them gaseous. The atom is not, then, mentally indivisible, but only actually so. It is the smallest portion of any substance as it is known by chemistry. If this view of atoms be true, certain important corollaries follow. One of them is this: The atom is only such matter

as we see about us on every hand. It has the qualities of *matter* and no others. You are not to erect gold into a god, when it is in the lump or in the atom. There is no more divinity in an atom of hydrogen than in a drop of water, which is hydrogen combined with oxygen.

And further, if we know anything with certainty about atoms, we know that there are sixty-three different kinds of atoms; for there are now known to chemistry that number of simple substances. Now all this is very unfavorable to the materialistic view. For the materialist likes to get his atom down to so small and occult a condition that he can slip into it a something which is not matter, and which does not at all belong to the atom, any more than the stamp on the coin, or the avarice which craves the coin, is a quality of native gold. Besides, it is very unfavorable to the evolution of materialism to have sixty-three different kinds of atoms. For there is *thought* involved in the difference. And what the materialist wants to begin with is a universal haze of homogeneous matter.

But if we accept the fair inferences of chemistry as to the existence and nature of the atom, we are again thrown into confusion by the following declarations of scientists: Prof. Balfour Stewart declares: "a simple elementary atom is probably in a state of ceaseless activity and change of form," and Clerk Maxwell declares it is "not a hard rigid body," "but is capable of internal movements." What, then, of those atoms within the elementary atom, which must move when it has "internal movements" and change their position when it changes its form? And while Balfour Stewart calls the atoms "truly immortal" beings, Herschel declares

that they have all the characteristics of "manufactured articles;" so Gassendi, so Clerk Maxwell—a declaration with which, however, Mr. Tyndall seems rather amused. The last mentioned author prefers to speak of the atoms as "self-moved and self-positied." *They* are the ground of the orderly universe; they begat themselves and move eternally of their own motion.

What now have we learned concerning the atom? Not much, surely; but more concerning the foundation on which stand those who see in atoms—"self-moved and self-positied"—the "promise and potency of every form and quality of life." We learn that they know amazingly little about atoms, and that scientists generally disagree widely on this subject amongst themselves. We learn to suspect that the atom is impotent until something else has been put into it. That something else is a something—as we shall see—very different from the atom itself. We learn to suspect that the confident world-building which smuggles into little bits of matter what does not belong to larger masses, or to matter at all as such, and then under the name of science rules out universal thought, is ignorant and arrogant assumption. We learn that when we are promised a solution of great problems by science, we are given only bad and atheistic metaphysics for those which are trustworthy in their recognition of an Absolute Mind.

But if we cannot get a world out of atoms alone, may we not out of atoms plus force? Whence, however, do we get our notion of force? And what is force? "That which moves or tends to move a body," is the reply of the scientist. Yes—but while I can see the motion of a body, I

cannot see that which moves or tends to move it. My senses cannot give me force from any inspection of the world outside. Whence then comes this notion of energy or force? From no whither but from the self-conscious, thinking and freely willing soul of man. I am conscious of the exertion of force in the control of my own body, and of the mental train of ideas and feelings. We might watch the silent swing of the heavenly bodies, or the minute and mysterious change of protoplasmic matter, to all eternity, and never get beyond motion to force, were it not for the self-consciousness of a soul which is itself forced to believe in causation, and which itself exercises and so demonstrates the existence of force. Scientists who have had somewhat more philosophical acumen than Mr. Tyndall have recognized this truth. We are dependent upon self-conscious and free spirit for our conception of this very force which the materialist wishes to separate entirely from spirit, so that he may make it, in its isolation, account for the universe, including spirit itself.

But we need somewhat far beyond atoms and aimless movements of atoms to construct a material universe. For the very word universe suggests much more. There is relation of action, there is interaction amongst forces. There is an arrangement and correlation of them so that they work together for one end. The scientists are just now proclaiming the great law of the correlation of forces. All forces, we are told, are modifications of one force, and work one into and out of the other according to fixed laws. This doctrine of the correlation of forces is—though the contrary is popularly believed—as yet proved

only in a very limited way. Respecting it, Lange, the historian of materialism, says: in its "strictest and most consequent meaning it is anything but proved; it is only an ideal of the Reason, perhaps, however, indispensable as a goal for all empirical research." Supposing it to be proved, to what sort of spectacle would nature unceasingly invite us? To the eye of sense there would be only the spectacle of unceasing and infinite movements connected together in certain invariable forms of sequence. But to the eye of reason there would be One Universal Power underlying and causing all these movements. And since all our notion of force comes from our own Thought and Free Will, what can we do with these many forces in nature, all working together in harmony, but refer them to one Absolute, Intelligent and Free Cause, an all-producing and intelligent Will, who is in them all?

In the simplest phenomena of matter there is something besides matter. There is Thought; there is Will; there is God. We need not only atoms and movements of atoms to account for a world of related things. We need a Will that moves according to a plan; and this need leads to the conclusion that Thought and Will are bound together in the production of all things. There is not a crystal formed without telling the story of something behind the substance of it which is *not* the substance itself. The face of the Infinite God looks out upon us through the crystal. Its angles are mathematical and orderly; that is, they show *Thought*. The movement of the atoms as they marshal themselves and fall into the line required by the type of the particular crystal to be formed, tells of an organizing Force

which is rational. The atoms march to the drum-beat of the living God. Let a man study the curious mechanism of the *Utricularia* or the Pitcher Plants, and note how cunningly devised is their structure for the capture of the insect-life from which they are to receive the nitrogen needed for their own growth—and if he be a man of healthy mind, he will think on Thought and feel confident that it is embodied in the marvellous structure before him. Thought is not the illegitimate and posthumous child of the universe to be thrust out of the home as a base-born intruder. Thought is the parent of the universe; it is the all-informing principle. Instead then, of the promise and potency being all in matter, in truth there is in matter, without Will and Thought back of, and working out its expression in, matter, no chance for any material universe at all.

And even Mr. Tyndall is fain to defend his shallow dictum by smuggling into matter something which he needs there to help his dictum, but which is not legitimately there at all. In his critique of Mr. Martineau he says: "matter I define as that mysterious thing by which all this has been accomplished." Can anything be more amazing than this? In matter, says the Professor, I find the promise and potency of all life. This is materialism, say his opponents, and atoms and movements of atoms will give you no life—no universe of any sort. I am not a materialist, retorts the Professor; at least not a "very rank" one; and I mean something different from atoms—I mean the thing that does it.

But it is objected to the view which sees God everywhere expressed in the material universe, that these same potent

scientists have looked the universe with microscope and telescope pretty thoroughly over, and have found no thought secreted in large quantities anywhere.

For instance, Du Bois Raymond asks for "a convolution of ganglionic globules and nerve-tubes proportioned in size to the faculties" of the infinite mind! Suppose in reply we ask for a sight of just one atom. Who has seen one? Nobody, so far as I can learn, except perhaps the wonderful Dr. Buechner, who calls the atoms of modern times, "discoveries of natural science." Has any one ever seen a physical force—for instance a current of electricity, a stream of magnetism, one of those tentacula which have been imagined as reaching out from all bodies and constituting the so-called force of gravitation? Has the astronomer or the scientist ever seen, tasted, smelled, or handled, any of that ether, the existence everywhere of which is the indispensable postulate of the theory of the correlation of forces? The answer to all these questions must be, No. Yet out of atoms and force and ether and such like entities, the materialist makes up his universe. Will he rule out thought? Will he make the immeasurably more remote and complex inferences to these unseen realities, and refuse to make the nearer and simpler inference to that quality of spiritual being which we know, because we live in the constant exercise of it ourselves? And when we say there is something you have left out in your reasoning, there is Thought and Will issuing force; shall he, then, grow airy and oracular, and escape by saying, Yes, Yes—something that looks amazingly like Thought, I admit, but it is really only the

mysterious something which does it all, and which *I* define to be matter ?

In further contradiction of the Belfast dictum of materialism I now remark, that—

Matter cannot give us life.

If it cannot give us the so-called material universe, it surely cannot give us life. But there is that in all *living* beings which we find it peculiarly impossible to account for on the hypothesis of materialism. If the movements of the stars and the rational but complicated action and interaction of all terrestrial forces, if the movements in inorganic bodies which most closely simulate those of the organic, if the forming crystal and the snow-flake and all the vast complex of non-living things—if these could be explained without the Thought and Free Will of the Absolute; what should we still have to say of life ? If atoms and aimless movements of atoms, or if “self-moved and self-posed atoms,” *could* give us the inorganic, could they also produce organism ? Must we not have for the simplest form of life something that goes beyond all mechanical, electrical or chemical play of atoms ? I say, Yes—and to use Mr. Tyndall’s own words, “the mysterious something” which does it, “I define” as life, or vitality. This definition, though really no definition at all, is certainly as good as Mr. Tyndall’s. But Mr. Huxley, who is a great biologist, laughs at this. He asks, “why should vitality hope for a better fate than the other *it*ys which have disappeared since Martinus Scriblerus accounted for the operation of the meat-jack by its inherent meat-roasting quality.” This is more funny than philosophical. For “names are to know things by:”

and if I find in living organisms certain activities and forces which cannot be accounted for by any known laws of physics or chemistry, why should I not sum them up by the word vitality? But the great biologist Haeckel has declared, that all things are equally living, and that there are no more difficulties for science in the formation of living organism than in such processes as earthquakes, winds, or tides.

Prof. Huxley too, knows a great deal about protoplasm; and, though he dislikes to be called a materialist, he avowedly uses "materialistic terminology," and speaks of the "matter of life" as though there were nothing to be seen in it but carbonic acid, water and ammonia. Inasmuch, then, as all protoplasm is essentially alike, all so-called life is caused by a certain arrangement and relation of these material substances, and the qualities of life are due wholly to the qualities of these substances. "I can find no intelligible ground," he declares in his essay on Yeast, "for refusing to say that the properties of protoplasm result from the nature and disposition of its molecules." With Mr. Huxley "the properties of protoplasm" cover conscious thought and free choice; cover every form of life.

Let us look at this materialistic way of accounting for all life. Now, first of all, it is not true as Mr. Huxley claims, that on the disappearance of a certain amount of carbonic acid, water and ammonia, an "equivalent weight" of the matter of life makes its appearance. On the contrary, it is true, as we have the uncontradicted assertion of authorities in chemistry for saying, that "there can be no weight of protoplasm, equivalent chemically, to any amount of car-

bonic acid, water and ammonia that may or can have disappeared." These three substances cannot even on paper be made to represent protoplasm; much less in practice. And to break up dead matter of life into these three requires one hundred and seventy pounds of added oxygen for every one hundred pounds of protoplasm. But what does all this prove? Why, just what every intelligent man already knows; that living organisms are chemists, that they can take compound substances, resolve them into simples, and reunite them to build up their own organism. Is there a farmer who does not know that his wheat is built up from the soil, and that he himself is built up from his wheat? But is this a warrant for saying that a hundred pounds of growing wheat is nothing essentially more than a hundred pounds of soil, or that man is the product solely of carbonic acid, water and ammonia? Here is some chemist hiding himself under the process when protoplasm arises from these three substances. And a very wonderful chemist is he too, who can do things which quite baffle every human chemist, and lead us to say—surely there is some God working wonders in this protoplasm. How does protoplasm decompose the compound into the simple, fix the simples in new form within itself, after selecting some and rejecting others? No laboratory can show such work as this. For instance, that organic force which builds up living bodies can decompose carbonic acid at ordinary temperatures into carbon and oxygen. Vegetable tissue can do this; not all the chemistry of modern science can accomplish the same thing.

Even matter of life that is just dead shows in itself that it has been composed by forces which defy description or im-

itation by the chemistry of men. But protoplasm living is quite another thing. It differs from dead protoplasm by that complex of powers and activities which we call vitality. And what can convert the dead protoplasm into the living protoplasm? Prof. Huxley calls it "subtle influences," and confesses that the action of living organism is "something quite unintelligible." And when we inquire what the learned biologist means by "subtle influences" we find that it is invariably *the presence of other life*. No protoplasm is formed except by other living protoplasm. No life has been discovered, according to Mr. Huxley's own view, in even the lowest forms, which is not from antecedent life. "In tracing the line of life backwards," says Prof. Tyndall, "we reach the protogenes of Haeckel, in which we have a type distinguishable from a fragment of albumen only by its finely granulated character." What then?—that little protogenes differs from the most grand thing that is not alive, more than the Himalaya mountains differ from the mole-hill. As says Dr. Elam: "the chemist could quite as easily construct a full grown ostrich as this despised bit of finely granulated albumen." This living protogenes is, like every other living being, found only as it is propagated by pre-existing life of its own kind. When, then, you ask what is there in the living protoplasm that is not in the simples of which it is composed; the answer is conclusive. There are the "subtle influences," the "quite unintelligible" force called organic, the act of propagation from pre-existing life; in brief, there is vitality.*

*Dr. Lionel Beale, after thirty years' study with the microscope, makes a plain issue with Mr. Huxley's unwarranted treatment of what the latter is pleased to call protoplasm. He does more than merely to show Mr. Huxley's statements

Moreover, we have in the world living beings which are not protogenes; we have countless Celenterata, Mollusca, Annulosa, Vertebrata; at the head of the last great type, we have man. And these are not protogenes. These are differentiated from it and from each other by something which is not matter, but which belongs to life and the types of life. It is puerile to reply that the protoplasm of each is the same, that the cell is the same everywhere, that the embryo of the higher in its progress toward perfection touches at the various stages at which stop the lower forms. This all proves, not that man and the monad are the same, because carbonic acid, water and ammonia are in each. We start with knowing that the difference is infinite even in the matter of organism between the two. If the individual cell is the same in each, so nearly that the microscope and chemical analysis can detect no difference, this goes to prove that the vast difference which *we know to exist*, is not a microscopic or chemical variation in the constitution of each. It is a difference in what the learned professor is pleased to call "subtle influences;" it is a difference that lies in inheritance and type of life.

When, then, a great biologist, beginning with a blunder in chemistry, tries to make things the same which are totally different, and on being accused of confounding things unlike, talks of "subtle influences" to cover up the vast chasm which he has virtually denied, but knows to exist;

and inferences in very unfavorable light. He demonstrates the wonderful and inimitable peculiarities of motion, the powers of nutrition and self-propagation, which belong distinctively to every form of life. No exhibitions of the forces of Physics or Chemistry at all resemble or explain what we know only under the names vital and vitality, living and life. Dr. Beale's statements, enforced by an abundance of other authorities, make us feel that while Mr. Huxley may be a scientific anatomist he is not above gaining applause for his unscientific opinions by the poor method of starring.

we lose our confidence in the acumen and candor of modern prophets of materialism. Nor is our respect for what these men call *science* largely increased.

Now, since Dr. Bastian's claims for spontaneous generation came to grief through the demonstrations of Pasteur and Prof. Tyndall, scientific men are, in the main, agreed to say in the words of the latter: "we cannot point to any satisfactory experimental proof that life can be developed save from demonstrable antecedent life." But this is the very proof, as Dr. Bastian pathetically claimed, which is needed to establish evolution. And so when (not as scientists at all, but as unscientific advocates of evolution), Mr. Huxley looks "beyond the abyss," and Mr. Tyndall "crosses the boundary," they see everything, life included, evolving itself from "not living matter." But why should a cooling world do what a cooling flask could not? Why should the movements of an atom be different beyond, from those this side, the "boundary and the abyss?" The great men do not answer, but keep on "looking beyond the abyss" and "crossing the boundary." Strange that, with such far-sight, they cannot find Absolute life in all terrestrial life, Thought and Will and Love in the organisms so near at hand.

And now to answer Mr. Huxley's jest about the meat-jack. I speak of density, porosity, compressibility, divisibility, and other "*itys*" in the meat-jack, because I observe that meat-jacks *have* qualities which men are agreed to call by these names. And when I see any single meat-jack laying hold of the meat upon it, and of the surrounding andirons, stone and brick, converting them into its own or-

ganism and afterward going on to produce other meat-jacks similar to itself, then I *will* speak of the vitality of the meat-jack. Until then, I shall not agree with these great authorities on the mystery of life; shall refuse to confound things which differ as do the monad and the man from the meat-jack. In all life there is that which no correct analysis can resolve into matter and forces of matter; there is that which uses matter and physical forces to build up organism. We call that something life. Matter cannot give us life. And lastly—

Matter cannot give us mind.

I shall be very brief in my treatment of this division of my theme. Its argument is somewhat known to you all. Philosophy and Theology are accused of treating matter very contemptuously. Be it so, it was and is a fault. But so-called science is avenging the maltreatment fully. Spirit, spiritual truth, the Infinite Spirit, are far too often subjects to condemn and degrade with it. We even meet, in the writings of scientists, with the proposal to study the operations of mind by investigating the structure and the functions of the brain; because, from the unreliableness of our consciousness, no other course offers any hope of success. We are very anxious to know how the savant is going to study the brain except through consciousness. Will he give chloroform to himself as well as the subject of his experiment before beginning his study? Long time ago it was said: "There is nothing great in man but mind." Biologists, like Mr. Huxley, assure us that the great thing is the brain; that the workings of the mind are only the sym-

bols of changes in the brain, and that brain is only protoplasm, which is carbonic acid, water and ammonia.

This claim, that mind is all managed by brain, and that the phenomena of consciousness are directly caused by the movements of brain molecules, can be answered physiologically. Man an automaton, is the science of Mr. Huxley, who forthwith stultifies himself by admitting that choice counts for something in the course of events. Dr. Carpenter, in his valuable work on Mental Physiology and in articles in the Contemporary Review, has controverted this materialistic view on physiological grounds. But there are higher grounds still for directly contradicting it. We stand face to face with our own mind. We know what it is to think, to feel, to choose. We know that the phenomena of thinking, feeling, choosing, are utterly unlike those of matter. We have no words to express the difference there is between a *parallelopipedon* and a thought, between a crystal of ice and a longing after God, between a pound of hydrogen gas and a firm choice to do right. Our own bodily organs reveal themselves in their qualities as utterly unlike the soul which uses them. Between any conceivable movements of the molecules of the brain and human thought, feeling, choice, there is a gulf as wide as the diameter of being. To the movements, in order to get to mental phenomena, you have to add something utterly unlike movements of molecules, have to add the whole thing to be accounted for; have to add thought, feeling, choice. Now I know these qualities of mind much more surely than any qualities of matter, and so far as I know both at all, I know them to differ. What warrant for anything can I have,

then, if I cannot say qualities so diverse, so contradictory, so inconceivably unlike, cannot inhere in the same substance? There is mind, and there is matter.

Still further, I know matter only through mind. I know nothing of atoms except through observation and inferences made in consciousness. Shall I prate of atoms to contradict the very consciousness which introduced me to them? I know nothing of forces in matter except through my own conscious exercise of choice, as voluntary and free. Shall I prate of physical forces to the denial of that spiritual energy which is the starting-point and symbol for them all? If I must deny the reality and substantial independence of either, I will deny rather that of matter than of mind. To see in Thought, in the Absolute Mind, "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life," is to be far less foolish than Mr. Tyndall. If we wish a name for that mysterious something, which in the world at large and in the individual soul of man, accomplishes all this—let us call it mind rather than matter. But cannot we refuse to be over-wise with some modern scientists and affirm as the indestructible data of consciousness, there is matter and there is mind, related, interacting, but not one; as diverse and irresolvable into each other in their substance as they are in their phenomena?

Kind friends—in conclusion, a few words which may seem to some egotistical. I speak them, facing the sneer of the Nation, whose editor thinks ministers are not competent to pass judgment on these questions of so-called science.

To the sneer I will only reply that these are questions of Psychology, Logic, Metaphysics, and Theology, quite as

much as of the sciences of matter and physical forces, and that in such questions I feel myself fully competent to criticise the inferences of any scientist. For ten years and more I have gone to these men whom modern popular scepticism makes "stars" of the first magnitude. I have gone to them candidly, patiently, frequently, for light upon the great problems of life. I have gone with no fear of consequences, because I have held it for indubitable truth, that the Thought and Love of our Father in Heaven is in all things, and that his truth cannot be found to be self-contradictory. I cheerfully acknowledge what these scientists have done to make the life of man more comfortable; what also they have done, though often unwittingly, to show us more of the Eternal, Omnipresent Life, which flows through all. But I have in my own mind settled down upon these conclusions regarding such stars of modern scepticism; you must take the conclusions for what they seem to you worth.

I find these "stars" to be, by no means especially fair and candid men. I do not now speak only of the modest Dr. Buechner, when he calls his opponents who believe in God and spiritual realities, such choice names as "speculative idiots," "howling pack," "mental slaves," "yelping curs," and alludes to them as "strangled snakes" which lie around the cradle of science. I mean even Mr. Tyndall as he shows himself in controversy with Mr. Martineau. I mean even Mr. Huxley, when he can put the present theory of Evolution on a par with the law of gravitation, and then give in proof such unseasoned, sappy stuff as he dealt out to his American audiences. Mr. Huxley must know that there is no comparison between the proofs, by observation,

experiment, deduction, prediction, which can be adduced for the shaky hypothesis of Evolution and the demonstrated laws of Gravitation. Dr. Elam, indeed, says of the doctrine of Evolution, that it is "a flimsy framework of hypothesis, constructed upon imaginary or irrelevant facts, with a complete departure from every established canon of scientific investigation." Without going thus far, we are warranted in saying that to place it beside the laws of gravitation, is a monstrous fraud upon the public. It may be a fraud of enthusiasm, but it is a fraud nevertheless. I mean even Mr. Darwin, perhaps most candid among them all. I will not call his theory a "puerile hypothesis," as Mr. Mivart has done. I will say, his candor is unfruitful so long as he admits that certain objections are fatal to his theory, and at the same time neither withdraws the theory, nor removes the objections.

Nor do I find these scientists who are the stars of modern popular scepticism, especially competent men—competent, that is to think and teach the truth outside of the very narrow range of facts to which they have devoted themselves. In logic, in metaphysical acumen, in reflective analysis, they are, it seems to me, vastly inferior to the school-men whom they affect to despise.

I find, in one word—that there is little safety or consolation in following these stars as they go a-wandering from their own narrow, beaten track. That God is unknown, that man is an automaton, that all things have come out of the homogenous cloud of material atoms, in which was and is the promise and potency of every form and quality of life—are not truths; and to teach them in the name of

science is immoral, and tends to mislead and destroy. Consequences, says Mr. Huxley, are the "beacons of wise men" and the "scare-crows of fools." These stars will not guide you into what is most true in philosophy or religion; but they may be your beacons, until you find your life in union of soul with the source of all life, your light in him who proclaimed and who is, the true light; even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world.





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